

Good Samaritan: Interrupted (2009)

I used to like to play Robin Hood. When I was a teen. With my dad's belongings. Here's one of my botched attempts.

After we moved from Oak Cliff, my dad continued to own our old house and rent it out, he didn't sell it until just a few years ago. There was a garage apartment out back, an old beat up one that no longer exists. That's where Pam lived, back when we were kids. (another blog entirely)

So in the 80's, for a short period of time, some man rented out the garage apartment. I'd caught glimpses of him before, he was thin, tall, and scraggly. I overheard my dad talking about him on occasion and I figured out, the renter had some problems. All sorts of problems.

So one day when I was about 18 I decided to help this man. I got a Bible, and some food. But I didn't stop there. I went into my dad's bathroom drawers and raided them: toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, soap...

socks, towels, canned goods from the pantry...

combs, vitamins...

Yes. I loaded up several boxes of pillaged items from my own home, put them into the trunk of my car under the cover of darkness, told my parents I was going to a friend's house. Then I drove to Oak Cliff.

I pulled up into my old driveway. His car was there. I snuck out of my car, popped the trunk, and

And was overcome with fear.

And it hit me: What if this man questioned these things, and told my dad? I hadn't considered this yet. What if he showed them to my dad? Another thing I didn't think of. What if my dad noticed his things missing?

I stood there in the driveway, looking at my loot. I was conflicted and torn. The Robin Hood in me was urging me to carry the boxes up the stairs to the garage apartment and leave them there, as planned. The intimidated daughter in me urged me to turn around, go back home, and return my father's belongings to their rightful places and their rightful owner.

I remember standing there in the moonlight. I glanced over my shoulder at the street I used to play on. I remembered popping tar bubbles with a stick and learning to ride my bike.

I never made up my mind. I didn't carry the boxes up the stairs, nor did I bring them back home. Know what I did? I took each box, dumped it out into the gravel driveway into a pile, then turned around and drove home.

My walk has been smattered with botched and compromised attempts at good deeds, ever since.

Sorry.